

# Hamilton's Autonomous Voice Community Charge

FREE



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## James Bay 2 Project

The Cree Indians and Inuit people of northern Quebec are joining forces with environmentalists to resist the construction of North America's biggest hydro-power project. They say that the project, known as James Bay 2, would destroy the largest remaining wilderness area in eastern North America and decimate the traditional self-sufficient culture of the regions native peoples, amounting to genocide as well as ecocide.

Quebec hopes to sell the power produced by the complex to utilities in the northeast USA, especially New York's Con Edison. A deal between Quebec's public utility, Hydro-Quebec (H-Q) and that of New York state, the New York Power Authority (NYPA), was signed in 1989. But the resale contracts between NYPA and

local utilities (predominantly Con Ed) are still under negotiation. Stateside activists hope that effective opposition to these contracts can halt construction of James Bay 2 by making it financially unworkable.

If the deal goes through, the 1,800 megawatts from H-Q would account for 7% of New York State's electricity beginning in 1995, with 80% slated for Con Ed. With H-Q assuming a whopping third world-size debt of \$60 million to build the project, it is depending on the deals with US utilities to make the project pay.

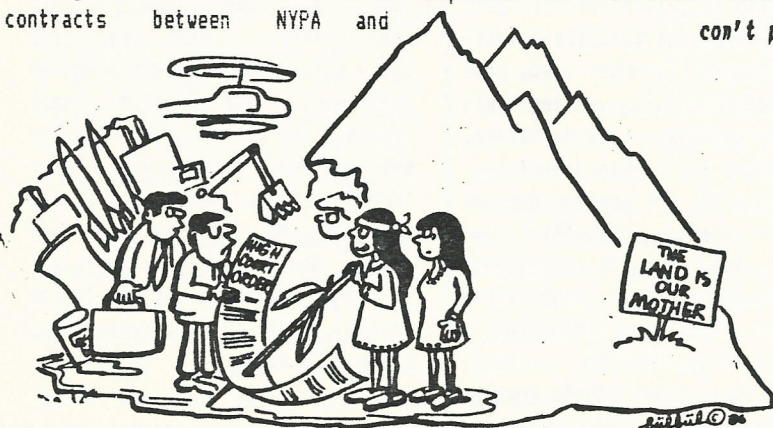
The James Bay 2 project calls for a series of hydro-dams to be built on five major rivers that drain into James Bay, a massive inlet of Hudson Bay in the remote expanses of northern Quebec.

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## Seeing Is Believing

We have all heard of the police attack on the man in L.A. and more recently the picture of the South Carolina cops kneeling a black man in the groin who they mistook for another man. What we don't hear (or see) is that these occurrences are by no means isolated or rare. Poor people, the young, non-whites and people of different sexuality are subjected to this 'treatment' daily, and the media has had plenty of chances to report this brutality, but hasn't. These recent events scared some people and led others to react. In Calgary, police went to break up a fight after a teenage dance, and were forced to leave by hundreds of youth yelling "you guys can't do that, this isn't L.A." On February 6th, activists of all shapes, sizes and sexuality marched in Toronto to mark the tenth year anniversary of the bath house raids, where 200 police arrested 275 men, the police acted brutally towards the gay men, as well as making remarks on their sexuality. Last year Montreal cops attacked gays and lesbians coming from a party, after taking off their badges. Police in Montreal also viciously

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WE HAVE A HIGHER COURT ORDER... MOTHER EARTH!





The struggle for native land claims going on across Canada is more than simply a case of who owns the rights to land. The issue encompasses preservation of their culture and livelihood. Such is the case of the Lubicon Lake Indians who for the past 20 years have fought oil and logging companies, for control of their land.

The Lubicon are a band of 500 Cree that live east of Peace River in northern Alberta. The Band lives on traditional land which has never been signed over to the federal or provincial government. Oil companies took interest in the Lubicon's traditional land when it was discovered to be rich in oil. In the late 1970's and early 1980's oil companies, including Petro Canada, built 400 wells to tap into the resources. To date \$6 billion worth of oil has been extracted from Lubicon land. The Lubicon have not received one penny of that revenue.

Prior to the oil companies invasion the Lubicon people enjoyed a traditional way of life. The people survived by hunting,

fishing and trapping. The oil operations have had a traumatic effect on the environment which is now endangering the very existence of the people. In 1979 the average income from trapping was \$5000 a year now it has dropped below \$400. This has forced many natives to become dependent on welfare from 10% in 1979 to 95% today. The effects have been devastating to the native families who have seen a rise in alcoholism and family violence. Their culture is quickly eroding away.

The Lubicon people have taken their grievances to provincial court charging that oil companies with operating illegally on Lubicon land. Their case was struck down, with the court stating that the land is not Lubicon but crown land. The Lubicon found they were getting nowhere legally because the government and courts especially in Alberta are very sympathetic to the oil industry. The judge who actually tried their case formerly worked as a lawyer for an oil company. The band brought their case to the United Nations charging that not only was the oil extraction a violation of their native land but that the devastation being wrought to the environment was effectively endangering their very existence. To this day little has been done.

In 1988 the Lubicon decided to take things into their own hands, and set up barricades leading onto their traditional lands. They were immediately pulled down by the RCMP.

By this time logging companies were also in on the game and

clear-cutting forests in an around their traditional territory. In November of last year 13 Lubicon were charged for damages done to forestry equipment that were torched and tires slashed.

Hearings for the 13 men will begin on April 29. In January of this year the 13 Lubicon charged refused to speak in court refusing to accept the authority of the Canadian government because their courts do not legally represent the Native people.

The Canadian government has offered \$25 million and a settled land claim to the Lubicon people. The Band has refused to accept the offer because the government has only offered to give Natives claims to one quarter of their traditional land. By allowing oil and logging operations to continue will only insure the future extinction of their band and a continued dependence on welfare. The \$25 million compensation is only a drop in the bucket compared to the \$6 billion received in oil revenues.

The case of the Lubicon Indians is not uncommon in Native land claim cases going on across the country. Time and time again Native people have found no justice in the Canadian legal system. The case of the Gitksan--Wet'sunet'en land claims being turned down in B.C., has placed many in the position to believe like Saul Terry (President of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs), that 'direct action' is their only hope.



## James Bay Continued

Together these dams would flood an area the size of Vermont, and alter the ecology of an area the size of France. An earlier phase of the project James Bay 1, a series of dams on La Grande River, flooded 11,00 square kilometers. James Bay 2 calls for more dams on La Grande and dams on the Great Whale, Nottaway, Broadback and Rupert rivers. Construction has already begun at the phase 2 sites on the La Grande. Activists are fighting to stop the building of roads to Great Whale, the next river targeted by H-Q.

While construction has already begun at La Grande, Cree leaders have pledged to resist construction of James Bay 2. Chief Billy Diamond, one of the beneficiaries of the \$225 million awarded to the Cree for the construction of James Bay 1, recently told the "Globe and Mail" that the Cree would be willing to use the same tactics to stop James Bay 2 that the Mohawks used to stop their traditional lands at Oka from being turned into a golf course last summer.

Diamond told international financiers to invest in James Bay 2 "at your own risk. Before a decision is taken to invest, there had better be a clear view of... the ability of the Crees to block the project."

Many Canadian and US environmentalists have also pledged to resist phase 2 of the project, citing the region's importance as a habitat for numerous species which have been nearly driven to extermination elsewhere in the

continent, including fresh water seals, beluga whales, and the caribou which the Cree have hunted for millenia without ever threatening the health and survival of the herds. Land now traversed by caribou migration routes would be flooded, and shorelines which are feeding grounds for waterfowl, including migratory geese on their winter

journey south, would be submerged.

The Cree and environmental groups have launched lawsuits both in Canada and the US to stop the power sales on ecological grounds. Canada's environmental protection bureaucracy is still young and ineffective, with many regulations still on the drawing board. A legal strategy in the US is to bar the power purchases unless it can

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## Cops Continued

attacked protesting students only months afterward. Nothing needs to be said about the sheer brutality of being shot for not getting out a car after speeding, as is what happed to the young black man, Marlon Neil last year in Toronto. Similar shootings of young people of colour occured twice more in T.O.

Both recent attacks were on young black men in the U.S., although this madness doesn't hit any specific race, it does generally hit one class, the poor. A good example of this is the recent docu-crime show Cops. A camera crew follows various cops in various cities enforcing 'law and order'. The showmakers and the portrayed cops are really blind to fact that their actions are often abusive and brutal. The neighbourhoods are disportionally those of black, Indian, Chicano and poor 'white trash'. For example, last night a man was 'subdued' (beaten) for not getting out of the car quick enough. He had not been charged so what was he doing in the cop car

in the first place? It should be noted that a prominent businessman has yet to be arrested on the show.

Should we rest easy at night knowing that in T.V. fashion, the other L.A. cops wouldn't talk



about the beating or that the S. Carolina cop was suspended (with pay), so if and when cops are brought on charges they are considerably less than you or me for similar crimes. With shows like Cops we are shown not that their abuse is wrong, but that they are unappreciated and hardworking people. We, the communities affected by this, must ask more often - To Serve and Protect Who?



# Smash the Tax

For those who still believe that unpopular laws can be changed by law-abiding citizens writing 'concerned' letters to the "Spectator", the defeat of Britain's Poll Tax must come as something of a blow. For the Poll Tax was defeated purely and simply by mass direct action.



Although the British Conservative Party is trying to concoct a mish-mash of taxes to replace the Poll Tax that retains some of "the principles" of the former system (whatever that may mean!), the simple fact is the Poll Tax is now effectively dead.

The anti-Poll Tax movement brought out hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets and into direct confrontation with oppressive Tory laws. I was lucky enough to be at a few of these rallies, including the massive Poll Tax riot in Trafalgar Square last spring. It was the kind of day cops and capitalists dread. A day when the crowd broke free, the police came and people got a taste of the unlimited possibilities of collective

action. It was as if people had woken up to the fact that oppression is not inevitable, you don't have to just sit there and let it happen. The Canadian tax system is, of course, an example of what happens when you do!

In fact, GST is in many ways an even more reactionary tax than the Poll Tax. After all, the unemployed, students and other low income groups only had to pay 20% of the Poll Tax. No such "leniency" in the face of poverty with the GST! And, of course, because people haven't got out of their armchairs and shown their anger on the streets, the government will probably be back for more. The lessons are clear, direct action gets the goods, inaction gets you screwed.

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## James Bay Continued

be proven that James Bay 2 conforms to the more stringent US environmental standards.

The Cree recently lost the first round in the New York state courts using this argument, but plan to appeal.

There is widespread talk among young Cree of blockading road construction crews, and even sabotaging power lines if need be. Ernie Webb, a Montreal based Cree radio journalist says the struggle against James Bay 2 will not be as easily defeated as the one against James Bay 1. "In the seventies the Cree didn't know what they were dealing with. The elders didn't believe that it could be done,

that the hunting grounds that they had known all their lives would be under water. After they lost their court case, they were forced to sign. They had a gun to their heads, metaphorically speaking."

In contrast, Webb says that the Cree who grew up watching the James Bay 1 struggle have more political savvy. "We're starting to form youth councils. 60% of the Cree population is under 25. So there's a new power base which is becoming more politically aware." Webb reports that last winter several young Cree held a protest encampment in the path of an H-Q cable line, and that an H-Q billboard announcing the phase 2 construction was covered with graffiti reading "CREE LAND." He says that a low level campaign of harassment is already underway at La Grande construction sites, with anti-James Bay bumper stickers being slapped on bulldozers and other equipment.

(Excerpts from "Damn James Bay II", by E. Weinburg in Love and Rage, February 1991)

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